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PROFESSOR RALPH B. PECK, OUR BELOVED PROFESSOR AND MENTOR

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ABSTRACT

Perhaps more than any other individual, Dr. Ralph B. Peck has served as a guide and leader in the maturing of geotechnical engineering as it has grown in the past 50 years (2013). He has led by example, by the logic of his arguments, clearly transmitting his judgment to student and practitioner alike. He has spoken and written consistently and eloquently on the application of art and science of the practice of subsurface engineering.

INTRODUCTION

Ralph was born in Winnipeg, Canada, to his American parents, Orwin k. and Ethel Huyk Peck on June 23, 1912. He married Marjorie E. Truby on June 14, 1937. He and Marjorie have a daughter and son-in-law, Nancy Peck (Allen) Young, and son and daughter-in-law, James (Laurie) Peck, and grandchildren, Michael Young and Maia Peck.

Throughout his career, he has been firmly committed to engineering education and engineering practice, applying them liberally in both the classroom and on the job site.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Dr. Ralph B. Peck has served as a guide and leader in the maturing of geotechnical engineering as it has grown in the past 50 years. He has led by example, by the logic of his arguments, clearly transmitting his judgment to student and practitioner alike. He has spoken and written consistently and eloquently on the application of art and science to the practice of subsurface engineering.

He was human being of Godly qualities and a wonderful instructor. I adopted his admonition in one of his classes, as my guiding principle: *"One Year's Experience Repeated Over Thirty Years does not Constitute Thirty Years' Experience."*

Ralph B. Peck was a longtime supporter of our Case Histories Conferences and presented keynote lectures to the First

(1984), Second (1988), Third (1993), Fourth (1998), and Fifth (2004) Conferences. He was to present a special message to the sixth Conference in Arlington, VA, in 2004, but it was not to be! Such is the will of God. He had presented special lectures in several of our Earthquake Conference as well.

I will like to present some memorable picture with Ralph B. Peck.

I joined UIUC for my graduate work in the fall of 1959. My dream was to work with Professor Peck, and I was happy that he accepted me without question.



Sally Prakash, Ralph B. Peck with other participants in the First Case Histories Conference in 1984 in St. Louis, MO



Ralph B. Peck (second from left) with Shamsher Prakash and other participants in 1984 Case Histories Conference in St. Louis, Missouri



*1988 Conference
Ralph B. Peck*



*Ralph B. Peck
1991*



*1991 visit to Albuquerque on his birthday
Marjorie, Ralph B. Peck and Sally Prakash*



Marjorie and Ralph B. Peck



*1993 Conference
Ralph B. Peck with other participants*



Ralph B. Peck with other participants in 1993 Conference



Ralph B. Peck with another participant in 1993 Conference



*Our beloved Ralph, happy and healthy
(1998)*



*Anxiously looking for something interesting
(1998)*



*Ready to greet old friends
(1998)*



*Shamsher Prakash, Ralph Peck, Vijay Puri,
and Sanjeev Kumar (1998)*



*Ahmed Elgamal, Ralph Peck
and Shamsher Prakash
(1998)*



Ralph enjoys greeting international participants (1998)



Interested participants include Suzanne Lacasse (NGI) with Ralph (1998)



Shamsher Prakash has something important to share with Ralph (1998)



Suzanne Lacasse waits her turn to talk with Ralph (1998)



Head table at the banquet, top row left to right: Sally Prakash, Ralph Peck, John Mathes, Tom Petry, and Braja Das (1998)



Shamsher Prakash, Ahmed Elgamal, Sally Prakash, and John Mathes applaud Ralph's remarks (1998)



Shamsher Prakash, Vlad Perlea, Sally Prakash, Ralph Peck, John Mathes and Tom Petry (1998)



Tom Petry presents the plaque to Ralph and thanks for his presentation (1998)



At a reception dinner in honor of Ralph, with Illini Alumni - Ron Salley is to his right (1998)



Ralph was very much interested in the exhibition, but coffee is a must at break (1998)



Another cup of coffee, and a chat with Shamsher Prakash (1998)



Ralph greets exhibitor (1998)



A contented Ralph enjoys a beer and reflects on the conference (1998)



*1998 Conference – Sitting left to right: Ron Sally, Ralph Peck
Standing left to right: Shamsher Prakash and Roy Olson*



*SP Prize Winners (2001)
Left to right: Robert Paolloci, Ahmed Elgamad, George Gazetas, Kenji Ishihara, W.D. Liam Finn, Ralph B. Peck,
Shamsher Prakash, Raj Sidhartan, Scott Steedman, Ikuo Towhata*



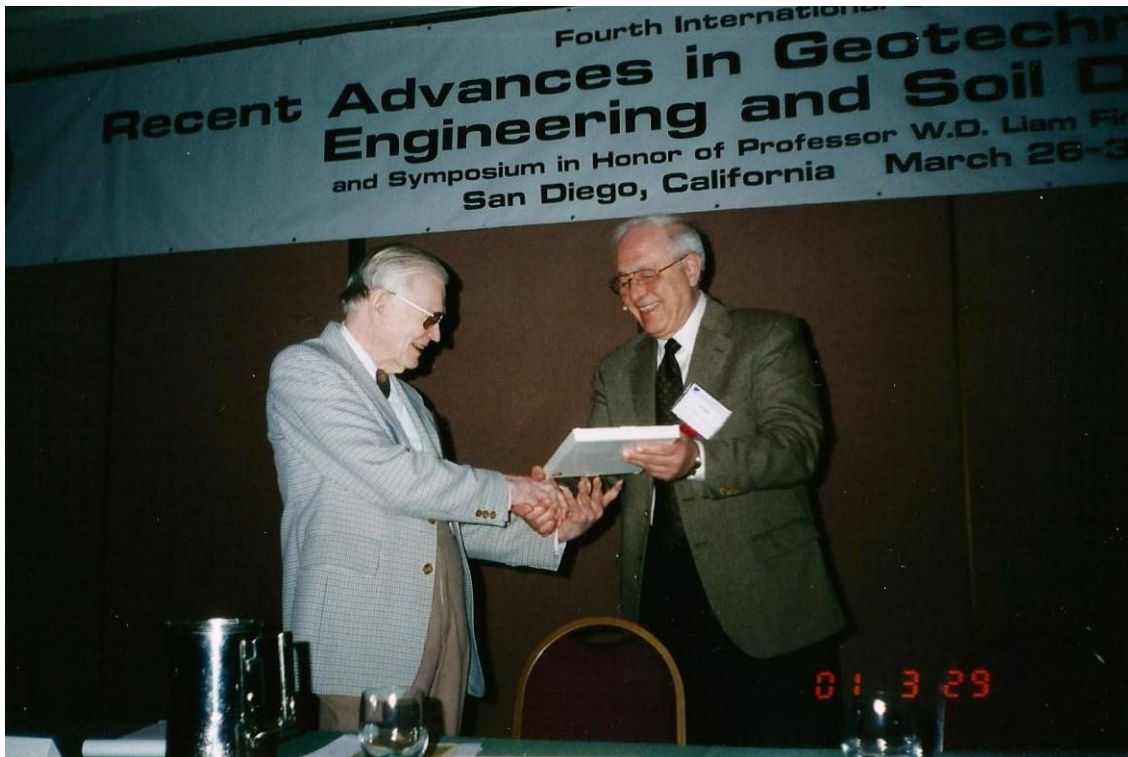
2001 Conference – Bomi Ghadiali, Ralph Peck and Shamsher Prakash



2001 Conference – Shamsher Prakash and Ralph B. Peck



Conference 2001 – Ralph Peck delivers his lecture on Earth Dams



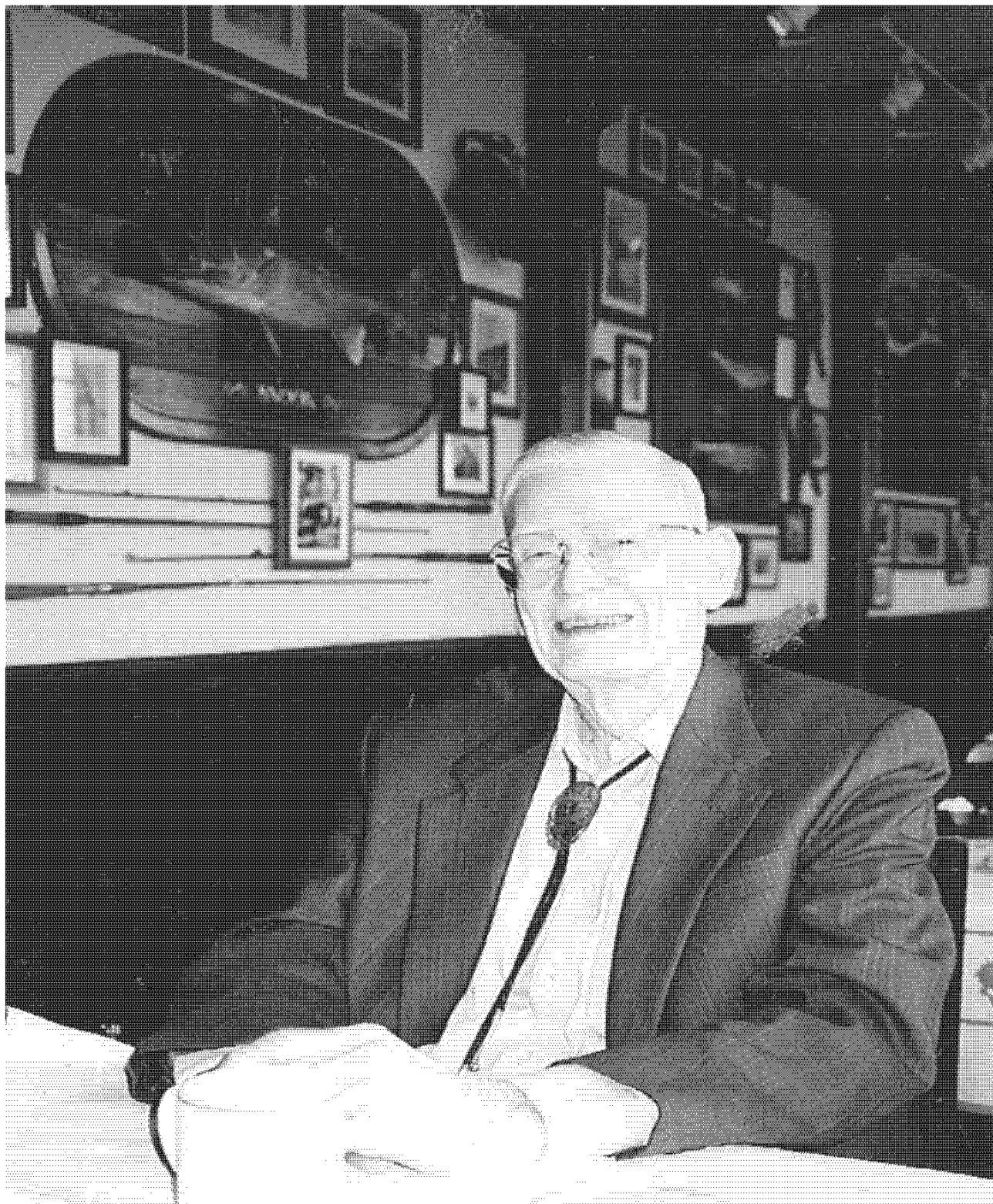
Conference 2001 – Ralph receives a plaque from Idriss



2001 - Kohji Kokushu, Ralph Peck, and Kenji Ishihara



2001 Conference – Ken Stokoe, Shamsher Prakash, Ralph Peck, and Ricardo Dobry



A very happy Ralph after the Illini Dinner during the 16th International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering in Osaka, Japan, in 2005

I like to describe Ralph as: “Soil Mechanics and its Laws Lay Hid in Night, God Said, 'Let Ralph Be,' and There was Light.”

*We Salute Ralph B. Peck

1. The Hero of Heroes
2. The Legend of Legends
3. The Soil Mechanics, Ralph B. Peck

Amen

I like to share two anecdotes:

Anecdote 1 – On Quality of Proceedings

Once Late Harry Seed commented that the proceedings of International Conference of this type we are organizing, if 30% of the papers are of good quality, it is a good Proceedings. At this, Ralph commented that these conferences had 70% papers of good quality. That observation was very satisfying.

Anecdote 2 – In San Diego Conference on Earthquakes in soil, Ralph was lecturing on “Liquefaction in Earth Dams.” He had asked for 20 minutes for his talk and I allotted him 25 minutes. When he was still speaking after 35 minutes, I asked Dr. Idriss who was chairing the session, he commented, “*I wouldn't even touch him with a 10-foot pole!*”